Village of Potsdam, New York
Request for Qualifications: Branding and Marketing Services
Downtown Riverwalk Trail and Streetscape Renovation Project
DOS Grant # C1001883

Introduction

The Village of Potsdam is seeking proposals from highly qualified consultants to develop and implement a comprehensive branding and marketing campaign as part of its Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). This project aims to establish a cohesive identity for the Village that highlights its unique character, enhances community pride, and attracts visitors, residents, and businesses. Through this Request for Qualifications (RFQ), the Village seeks firms or teams with the interest, demonstrated expertise, and capacity to assist in this pivotal effort.

From the list of responding firms, Potsdam will select the firm best suited to provide the branding and marketing services required to implement Potsdam's vision for developing a creative campaign. The selected firm will collaborate with the Village to ensure the campaign aligns with our vision and objectives. This project is being funded through a DRI grant provided by the NYS Department of State (DOS) – project # C1001883.

Background

The Village of Potsdam's DRI Strategic Investment Plan cited "Four Pillars" guiding the revitalization of downtown, including:

- **Rebound:** Bring back downtown Potsdam as an economic hub with a variety of businesses, diversely skilled workforce and strong partnerships to attract new sustainable investment downtown and support existing businesses.

- **Rebuild:** Preserve the Village's unique architectural heritage, utilizing environmentally sustainable options and creating a place where residents of all income levels are proud to call home.

- **Rejoice:** Celebrate and enhance the Village's connection to the Raquette River and status as a regional destination for arts, education, food, retail and entertainment, providing more opportunities to bring the community together.

- **Revitalize:** Create a vibrant, accessible downtown, connected by multiple transportation options with a focus on place-making that retains its strong sense of history.

The Village of Potsdam's DRI Strategic Investment Plan centers on revitalizing downtown as a vibrant and accessible hub. This branding and marketing campaign is integral to tying together the Village's diverse initiatives under a cohesive identity that amplifies its connection to the Raquette River, showcases it as a regional destination for arts and culture, and supports the preservation of architectural heritage while driving economic growth.

Project Description

The selected consultant will work with the Village to develop and implement a cohesive branding and marketing campaign that aligns with Potsdam's Downtown Revitalization Initiative goals. The scope includes creating foundational branding elements such as a brand strategy, visual identity, and messaging. Additionally, the consultant will collaborate on the design of promotional materials, signage, and digital assets, and assist with a strategic brand roll-out to engage the community and stakeholders. Please note the scope is not expected to include the creation or dissemination of advertising materials as part of a broader advertising campaign. Future advertising efforts may be informed by the outcomes of this project.

The Village of Potsdam is the lead agency for the development of the branding and marketing campaign. The project will reference the Village's DRI Strategic Investment Plan, the Village's 2012-2022 Comprehensive Plan, and the results of the Village's 2024 Identity and Vision Exercise.

Scope of Work

Task 1.1 Draft Designs

The design consultant shall prepare draft branding designs that include a **comprehensive brand strategy, visual identity, and key messaging**. The strategy should define the Village's positioning and craft a compelling brand story, slogan, and key messaging. Draft designs shall also include:

- **Visual Identity** elements, such as logo(s), color palette, typography, and motifs.
- **Preliminary Content Needs Assessment**, including website content, advertising copy, and identification of needs for photography and videography.
- **Wayfinding Elements**, such as directional signs, gateway signs, interpretive signs, and information kiosks consistent with the Downtown Revitalization Initiative Strategic Investment Plan.

The consultant will engage stakeholders, including the Village Board, departments, and the public, to review and select a preferred final design.

Work Products: *Draft designs, branding strategy, content needs assessment, and supporting materials*

Task 1.2 Final Design

Based on approved draft designs, the consultant shall deliver final designs for branding, a comprehensive plan for signage and wayfinding, and enhanced visual and messaging elements, including:

- **Final Visual Identity** package with logo files, typography, and brand guidelines.
- **Detailed Wayfinding Plan**, including directional signs, gateway signs, interpretive signs
- **Branded Materials** such as banners, posters, and maps, and templates for business cards, email signatures, and letterhead.
- **Village Branding for Departments**, such as vehicle wraps, uniforms, and official signage.
- **Additional Designs** for other public assets or Village-themed promotional items.

Work Products: *Final designs, signage plans, and marketing / branding materials*

Task 1.3 Branding Rollout Strategy

The consultant shall develop a comprehensive plan to implement the new Village brand, ensuring alignment and integration with other desired Village brands such as the Police Department, Museum, and Recreation Center. This includes:

- A **review** of existing branding for these entities and recommendations on ways to align, complement, or integrate their visual identities and messaging with the Village brand.
- Where necessary, **supplemental branding** elements or sub-brands to ensure a cohesive relationship between the Village brand and related entities.
- A **timeline** for rollout activities, such as introducing the brand at public events, unveiling new signage, updating Village properties, and engaging the community in the process.
- A strategy for **community engagement**, ensuring residents and businesses embrace the new identity.

Work Products: *Branding rollout plan, alignment recommendations, sub-brand designs (if applicable), and community engagement materials*

Task 1.4 Website and Digital Presence – ADD ALTERNATE

The consultant shall identify recommendations for improving the Village website and create a cohesive digital brand presence, including:

- **Website Design Modifications**, aligned with the new brand strategy, emphasizing user experience and accessibility.
- **Social Media Branding** for platforms like Facebook and Instagram, including profile designs, templates, and guidelines.

Work Products: *Redesigned website, social media templates, and digital branding guidelines*

Project Reporting

The design consultant shall provide the Village with all of the information required to complete DOS Semi-Annual Project Status Reports and a Final Project Summary Report.

Budget:

The total budget for this project shall not exceed $52,000.

Proposal Requirements

Respondents must include the following in their submissions:

1. **Letter of Interest:**
    - Include contact information and an overview of the firm/team.
2. **Scope of Work:**
    - Detailed work plan for completing the tasks outlined above.
    - Timeline and deliverables.
3. **Qualifications and Experience:**
    - Firm profile, relevant projects, references, and resumes of key team members.
4. **Work Samples:**
    - Examples of similar projects.
5. **Diversity Commitment:**
    - Plan for meeting NYS Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) goals (30% combined participation).

Submission Details

Proposals must be received **before 3:30 pm on Tuesday, March 4, 2025** in both hard copy and digital formats. Submit two (2) hard copies delivered in person or by third party carrier to:

Ms. Georgine Scott, Village Clerk
Village of Potsdam
P.O. Box 5168
2 Park Street, Civic Center
Potsdam, NY 13676

Digital copies must be emailed to:
dthurlow@vi.potsdam.ny.us

Selection Procedure:

Responses will be evaluated by a committee of Potsdam's staff and resident volunteers. Responses will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Responsiveness to RFQ: 10 points
- Understanding of Scope of Work: 20 points
- Qualifications and Experience: 25 points
- Proposed Schedule: 15 points
- Creativity and Innovation: 20 points
- MWBE Participation: 10 points

From the list of qualified firms, the Village Board of Trustees will select the firm that is best suited to assist the Village, in accordance with its procurement policy. Interviews may be required of qualified finalists.

Submission of responses by New York State certified Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises is strongly encouraged. The selection of the consultant shall be made without regard to the consultant's race, color, religion, gender or gender identification, national origin, age, disability, familial status, sexual orientation or veteran status.

MWBE Requirements

The Village and the DOS have established an overall goal of fifteen (15) percent contract participation for NYS certified Minority-Owned Business Enterprises and fifteen (15) percent contract participation for NYS certified Woman-Owned Business Enterprises for a combined total of thirty (30) percent.

For the purposes of providing meaningful participation by Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprises and achieving the contract goals established, the selected design consultant should reference the directory of New York State Certified Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprises found at:

http://ny.newnycontracts.com/FrontEnd/VendorSerarchPublic.asp

Where Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprise goals have been established herein, the design consultant must document to the satisfaction of the Village and DOS their "good faith efforts" to provide meaningful participation by Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprises as sub-contractors or suppliers in the performance of the contract.

Anticipated Project Timeline

- RFQ Issued: Tue 02/11/2025
- Deadline for Questions: Wed 02/19/2025
- **Proposal Deadline: Tue 03/04/2025**
- Recommendation to Board of Trustees: Mon 03/17/2025

Additional Considerations:

1. The Village of Potsdam is not responsible for responses that are not received or that do not arrive by the submission deadline.

2. Expenses incurred in the preparation of responses shall be borne by the respondent(s) with the express understanding that the respondent(s) may not apply for reimbursement for these expenses.

3. By submitting a response, the respondent agrees that it will not make any claim for or have any right to damages because of the lack of information or misrepresentation of the information provided in the response.

4. If the respondent provides material(s) of a confidential nature for disclosure to third parties, the respondent should clearly indicate the specific material(s) it considers confidential. Subject to the provisions of FOIL and any other applicable laws, the Village of Potsdam may agree to maintain the confidentiality of such material(s) if requested. The Village of Potsdam assumes no responsibility for any loss or damage resulting out of any determination requiring disclosure of information pursuant to FOIL.

5. The Village of Potsdam is not liable for any costs incurred by any individual or firm work performed to prepare its response, not for any travel and/or other expenses incurred in the preparation and/or submission of its response or participation in subsequent interviews or presentations. Further, the Village of Potsdam is not responsible for any costs incurred prior to the approval of the contract by the Village of Potsdam.

6. The DOS must approve all consultants and sub-consultants. The design consultant must comply with all of the provisions in the contract (C1001883) by and between the Department of State and the Village of Potsdam, including all appendices and Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise requirements (thirty – 30 percent). A copy of the contract is available upon request.

Notification of Award:

The successful respondent will be notified by telephone, followed by written confirmation. For those proposals that are not accepted, respondents will be notified in writing, via email. The Village will authorize the award of the contract to the successful respondent. In the event a contract cannot be finalized within thirty (30) days of the award, the Village of Potsdam reserves the right to enter into negotiations with another respondent.

Additional Information

For questions or further details, please contact:

David Thurlow, Economic Developer
(315) 265-1670
dthurlow@vi.potsdam.ny.us